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RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 1311  
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DEPARTMENT FOR AF/E JLIDDLE

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SUBJECT: TANZANIA PROMISES HUMANE APPROACH ON REFUGEE CAMP  
CLOSURE

REF: SECSTATE 62420

¶1. (SBU) RefCord and PolOff delivered reftel demarche on June 18 to Director of Refugees Judy Mtawali at the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), in the absence from Dar es Salaam of both the Minister and Deputy Minister of Home Affairs. In response to encouragement of a humane approach to the upcoming official closure of Mtabila, Mtawali stressed that the GOT is taking a flexible approach to the closing of the camp and understands that Mtabila will not be closed by the previously agreed deadline of June 30, 2009. However, Mtawali also restated the GOT's firm intention to move forward with refugee repatriation as quickly as possible. RefCord also raised the issue of naturalization of the 1972 Burundian population. Mtawali stated that guidance on this issue has come from President Kikwete. Tanzania particularly wants to avoid having Burundian enclaves that might have an undue influence on local politics. Mtawali also said that the GOT's position is affected by the memory of having Rwandan refugees return to Rwanda after having been granted citizenship in Tanzania.

¶2. (U) RefCord and PolOff also met with UNHCR Representative Yacoub El Hillo and Deputy Representative Indrika Ratwatte, relaying the information from reftel. El Hillo said that UNHCR continues to work behind the scenes with GOT officials to ensure that the repatriation and local integration of Burundian refugees adheres to international law and standards. El Hillo indicated that the number of refugees registering for repatriation convoys out of Mtabila continues to be low but that they will wait to see how the situation develops during the summer months, which are traditionally the peak period for return. In regards to local integration of the 1972 "Old Caseload" Burundian refugee population, El Hillo said that UNHCR anticipates 30 percent of the approximately 170,000 refugees will have their citizenship applications denied in the first review. He estimated that one-half to two-thirds of those cases will be approved on appeal and that UNHCR will need to seek alternative solutions (repatriation, resettlement) for the remaining population.

¶3. (U) UNHCR Deputy Director Ratwatte asked for USG assistance in processing refugees for resettlement out of Kanembwa Processing Center at an expedited pace. He expressed concern that Kanembwa is full, which will prohibit UNHCR from moving more individuals under resettlement consideration out of the camps and into the processing center. This is a key element of UNHCR's attempt to encourage repatriation - by reducing the temptation for refugees to stay in the camps in

the hope of being accepted for resettlement consideration as  
their neighbors have been accepted.  
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